

Accessible Education Provision for Neurodivergent Children  
through graduated interventions and academic support.



*An organisation that aims to improve every child's life  
by being closer to nature,  
providing equality in learning  
and promoting well-being*

# TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTDOORS POLICY FOR RAW LEARNING

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## **1. Introduction**

Outdoor Learning is a unique method of Outdoor Education that allows children to develop confidence, independence, self-esteem and awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.

Learning outside the classroom is defined as: "the use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning."

We, here at Raw Learning, passionately believe that children benefit in participating in a range of activities in an enabling environment as this makes the most memorable learning experiences. Every child should experience the world outside the classroom as an essential part of their learning and development.

We aim to provide our learners with first hand experiences that inspire and enhance their learning and development, which are essential to promote learner self-esteem, engagement and enjoyment in their learning, and helps them to make sense of their world.

- We are strongly committed to ensure that each child achieves their best.
- We encourage each child to take responsibility and become independent learners.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of Outdoor Learning is:

- To provide children with experiences that encourage an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
- To learn to respect and care for their own local environment.
- To abide by rules and set standards of behaviour.
- To work co-operatively in groups and to respect each other.
- To develop children's self-esteem and self-confidence through the setting of small achievable tasks.

By providing outdoor learning opportunities, Raw Learning aims to:

- Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation.
- Make learning more engaging and relevant.
- Promote independent learning and curiosity.
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk.
- Develop resilience and the ability to deal with uncertainty.
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments.
- Improve learners' attitudes to learning.
- Promote and develop self-esteem and mental well-being.
- Provide a foundation for life-long learning and a healthy lifestyle.

All Facilitators are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and the procedures and practices to be followed when learning takes place outside the classroom.

## **3. Policies and Outdoor Learning**

This policy is based on the national guidance published by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) which can be found on their website: [www.oeap.info](http://www.oeap.info).

Facilitators attending Outdoor Learning sessions should read and be familiar with this policy alongside the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Children
- Health and Safety
- Asthma (if asthmatics are attending the sessions)
- Behaviour
- First Aid
- Risk Assessments

Particular attention is paid to the following areas:

### **Health and Safety:**

- The Outdoor Learning curriculum supports children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.
- A site risk assessment has been carried out and a copy is held along with the other policies.
- The Outdoor Learning Leader has an up-to-date certificate in ITC Outdoor First Aid and is in charge of first aid arrangements.
- All facilitators have first aid training.
- A first aid kit is available for all sessions.

- In the case of an accident requiring further assistance, an emergency contact form is kept in the Forest School folder and a charged mobile phone is carried. Raw Learning will contact parents.
- Fires are a valuable part of the Outdoor Learning experience but will only be lit according to the procedures below.

#### Safeguarding:

- Outdoor Learning sessions are led by a trained Forest School Leader, supported by facilitators.
- Everyone involved is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities.
- Facilitators and volunteers are made aware of the relevant school policies and procedures to ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them.
- All facilitators have current enhanced DBS checks.
- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being will be shared with our named Safeguarding Lead, i.e. Rachel King, and a Cause for Concern form will be filled out as soon as possible so that our school's Safeguarding Policy can then be followed.
- Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know, who will then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

#### Equality and Inclusion:

- During Outdoor Learning, all persons are treated equally.
- We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

#### Behaviour:

- We operate within the Behaviour Policy of Raw Learning.
- We praise and reward good behaviour using the established systems of the provision.
- When a child's behaviour threatens the well-being of him/herself or others, and he/she does not respond to a verbal warning, he/she may be given some time away from the activity in order to self-regulate.

#### Medical and Emergency Contact Details:

All Medical Care Plans and Emergency contact details are held in the Forest School folder.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Director, Rachel King, will ensure that:

- All activities and visits comply with the guidance in this policy.
- All leaders are appropriately competent, confident and accountable to carry out their allocated responsibilities.
- Access to expert advice is available, where needed, such as a competent Outdoor Education Advisor.
- When taking part in a visit or activity, each facilitator is clear about their role.
- Suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level all the adults included in the visit or activity.
- Sufficient time is allowed for activities and visits to be organized properly.
- Support is given for the development of competent leaders.
- Support is given to ensure that all activities and visits are effectively supervised, information has been shared with parents/carers and consent has been given if required.
- Arrangements have been made for any medical needs or special education needs of all participants.

- Inclusion issues are addressed.
- Insurance arrangements are appropriate.
- If charges are made to parents/carers, these are within legal and employer requirements.
- The types of visits that require a preliminary visit by facilitators are identified in the policy.
- Risk Management is proportionate, suitable and sufficient.
- Where the activity or visit involves a third-party provider: appropriate checks have been made and assurances obtained, a clear contract stating what the contractor is to provide is in place, and the provider holds sufficient indemnity insurance.
- All visits are evaluated against their objectives, including best value, teaching and learning, quality of experiences, addressing issues raised by any incident, and informing future visits.
- Contingency plans are in place to deal with changing circumstances during a visit.
- There are suitable emergency procedures in place for each visit, including an Emergency Plan for off-site visits (i.e. procedures to ensure that parents/carers are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident).
- Serious incidents are reported, meeting the requirements of RIDDOR.

Children must:

- Not take unnecessary risks.
- Immediately follow the instructions of facilitators, volunteers, and other adults involved in the activity or visit.
- Follow the provision's Behaviour Code of Conduct.
- Be aware of anything that may harm and threaten them and tell someone in charge as soon as possible if they are concerned.

Parents/Carers will be informed of the details of any activity or visit which takes place off-site so that they can make an informed decision as to the participation of their child. Parents must:

- Complete and sign a consent form giving permission for their child to participate in all activities and visits which take place off-site when their child joins Raw Learning, and to receive first aid in an emergency.
- Support their child in understanding and following the provision's Behaviour Code of Conduct.
- Provide information, when requested, about any issues that may impact their child while engaged in an off-site activity or visit to enable facilitators to fulfill their responsibilities under their professional duty of care.
- Provide two emergency contact names and telephone numbers.

## **5. Environmental Considerations and Conservation**

One of the principles of Outdoor Learning is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. We teach children about respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the wild area around them.

Encouraging children to care for the environment is an essential part of Outdoor Learning. In order to encourage the children to look after the site we will always leave it tidy and never damage anything growing in it. We will only collect things that are on the ground and leave the area as we found it when we leave.

## **6. Legislation and Outdoor Learning**

Legislation of importance to Outdoor Learning includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

This act makes it statutory that an employer has a duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of their employees (in the case of schools, adults and children) and any equipment used by them, and that employees are responsible for the Health and Safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts.

## **7. Assessment of Risk and Risk Management**

Risk is a natural part of everyday life and it is impossible to entirely eliminate it in those activities that involve risk. Here at Raw Learning, we believe that it is important for children to learn how to understand and manage risk and uncertainty for themselves. This helps to build their self-esteem and resilience and prepares them to face the challenges and uncertainties of adult life. We believe that children should be provided with opportunities to explore their world through well-planned, well-managed activities that have had a risk-benefit assessment. This means that the potential benefits and learning outcomes justify any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place).

Risk-benefit assessments are carried out for all activities and visits that take place outside the classroom or off-site by competent facilitators and recorded. Common-sense is used to decide what constitutes a risk and how this can be managed so as to reduce the risk. Focus is on significant risks, not trivial ones, and involves a systematic examination of what might cause harm to learners and facilitators.

A Risk-benefit assessment will include:

- Identification of significant risks
- Identification of significant controls
- Adapting procedures to ensure learner and facilitators medical and SEN needs are appropriately met.

Outdoor and off-site activities include, but are not limited to:

- Garden activities, such as mud kitchen, fire lighting, growing vegetables.
- Outdoor theatre.
- Outdoor learning in the woods.
- Visiting or participating in any off-site activity, e.g. the park, library, beach, etc.
- Physical activities, e.g. climbing trees, foraging, swings/slack line/hammocks/ropes, carpentry skills, managing the environment, kayaking, climbing wall.

Benefit Risk Assessments are in place to cover the following:

- Outdoor Learning Site Assessment
- Outdoor Learning sessions: including Sensory Activities, Minibeasts and Shelter Building
- Tool use
- Campfire Activities

These Benefit Risk Assessments can be found in the Forest School folder.

### **Safety Sweep and Checklists:**

The Outdoor Learning leader will carry out a thorough sweep of the site for hazards and risks before the group enter the site and appropriate measures will be put in place, e.g. the removal of an object, or warning the group of specific dangers related to the site.

## **8. Policy and Procedures for Use of Tools and Equipment**

Tools and safe use of tools are an important part of Outdoor Learning. Their use will be carefully managed by the Outdoor Learning Leader with an area of the site set aside for tool use.

- Introduction to each tool will be by an official 'Tool talk'. (These can be found in the Forest schools File)
- Good practice will be demonstrated by the Outdoor Learning Leader at all times.

- Tools will be introduced to the children only when the Outdoor Learning Leader feels the children are ready.
- All tools will be used on a 1:1 adult to child ratio when using them.
- Risk assessments of tool use are carried out in addition to other Outdoor Learning activities and reviewed on a regular basis.
- All tools will be returned to the tool bag and locked away at the end of each session. This is the Outdoor Learning Leader's responsibility.
- All resources and equipment are checked regularly.
- Any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment is repaired and cleaned, or replaced.

(See also Appendix 1 on Tools)

## **9. Policy and Procedures for Lighting Fires**

Before lighting a fire at Outdoor Learning, the following should be in place:

- Children must have a secure knowledge of log circle safety:
  - **Stand behind the log**
  - **Step over and sit down on log**
  - **Stand up, turn around and step over log**
  - **Children are not allowed to cross the circle or step into the circle**
- In addition to the other resources, we will take a large container full of water.

When lighting a fire:

- Only a trained Forest School Practitioner will take responsibility for the fire. This will be their sole responsibility for the session. They shall be responsible for lighting it, manning it while it is burning and putting it out at the end of the session.
- The fire shall be contained within the area marked out within the center of the log circle. The ground around shall be cleared of flammable material.
- Check for low overhanging trees.
- Have a container of water beside the fire to put it out and deal with burns.
- The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee.
- While the fire is being lit, the children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
- The fire will be extinguished before the session ends.
- NO fires will be lit during peak fire risk periods.

(See also Appendix 2)

All adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating during Outdoor Learning: Eating Policy (see also Appendix 3)

- Everyone should wipe their hands before handling food and drink.
- All foods are stored in airtight containers.
- Only clean equipment is used.
- Everyone is aware of any special dietary needs of the children who have food allergies and any medication.
- Food will be cooked correctly.
- All equipment and waste is cleared away.

The Outdoor Learning Leader will follow the Effective Group Management Procedures outline in the Forest schools Handbook.

## **10. The Role of the Outdoor Learning Leader**

- The Outdoor Learning Leader is a trained Level 3 Forest School Practitioner and holds any up-to-date ITC Outdoor First Aid Certificate. The Outdoor Learning Leader is responsible for organising the planning and running of all Outdoor Learning sessions.
- The Outdoor Learning Leader has the safety of the children uppermost at all times. The leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments.
- The leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date.
- The leader will carry an emergency pack at all times.
- The leader is responsible for all equipment and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned to the resource area after use.
- The Outdoor Learning Leader will keep an accident book and keep parents fully informed of any incidents that may occur during a session, e.g. trips, falls, stings, etc.

## **11. Outdoor Learning Rules**

- Keep your hands away from your mouth
- Leave things to grow
- Keep within set boundaries
- Follow the 3R rule

## **12. Routines and Procedures for Outdoor Learning**

Preparation – The Outdoor Learning Leader will do a sweep of the site prior to the weekly sessions.

First Aid kit, inhalers and wipes are kept in the box. The tool bag, water containers and other equipment will be taken as appropriate. The Designated Leader will carry the rucksack to the site.

During the session, children participate in a variety of activities which are totally inclusive, thus catering for all ability levels. They are taught a variety of woodland skills through practical hands-on activities. They also learn how to light fires safely. The children learn the care and safe use of a wide range of tools. This is a tightly supervised activity on a 1:1 ratio of adult to children. It is introduced gradually in small steps. Children are encouraged to listen attentively to instructions and to take responsibility for their actions. This is achieved by games that also encourage respect for the environment.

After the session, equipment will be washed and stored as appropriate. Flasks and water containers will be emptied and cleaned out. Tools (if used) will be cleaned and locked away in the resources area.

## **13. Essential Equipment Needed for Outdoor Learning**

A kit box – containing the following essential items – will always accompany the group:

- EAP (Emergency Action Plan)
- Mobile phone
- Medical Care Plans
- Wet wipes
- Protective gloves
- Insect repellent
- First Aid Kit
- Inhalers
- Carry bag for dirty/wet items
- We would also take a ground sheet and string to erect a shelter as needed.



## **14. Clothing requirements for Outdoor Learning**

The following clothing requirements are for everyone attending an Outdoor Learning session:

- Woolly hat/ sun hat
- Gloves
- Jacket/waterproof coat
- Fleece/sweatshirt
- Waterproof trousers
- Spare socks
- Stout shoes/ wellies/ boots

## **15. Toileting considerations**

Any children needing the toilet during the session must let a facilitator know where they are going. This is to conform to our safeguarding procedures and to ensure that facilitators are always aware of where the children are at all times.

## **Appendix 1** Tools

Using small hand tools is an important part of Outdoor Learning as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self-confidence.

Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Outdoor Learning Leader and will be inspected before each session to ensure safety.

Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.

Whilst using hand tools the facilitators to child ratio is increased. This will be achieved by following these guidelines:

- Facilitators to child ratio 1:2 for bow saws and knives, and for KS1 children, all hand tool work.
- Facilitators to child ratio 1:8 (KS'') with hacksaws and peelers.
- Tools to be kept in the Outdoor Learning tool bags and only removed by the Outdoor Learning facilitators.
- Penknives must be opened and closed by Outdoor Learning facilitators.
- Running with tools is prohibited.
- Pointing with tools is prohibited.
- Children will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed.
- Bow saws must have a baled guard on them when not in use. Blade guards to be removed and put back only by Outdoor Learning facilitators until children have been shown how to do this properly and safely.
- Wood being sawn must be supported on a sawhorse or a natural sawing break – hands must be kept away from the blade.
- When using penknives to whittle, this must be done at the side of, and downwards of, the body.
- All tools must be counted back into the toolbox at the end of the session.
- Volunteer helpers must receive basic training on the use of individual hand tools before being allowed to use them with children.

## Appendix 2 Fires

Campfires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Outdoor Learning. We aim to ensure that all children and adults participating in Outdoor Learning sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

### Location:

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for campfires.
- Campfire areas are enclosed by logs or large stones to prevent the spread of fire.
- Storm kettles are only used on flat ground and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.

### Positioning of Children and Adults:

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating logs at least 1.5 m from the fire pit.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over.
- Once permission has been given, they must sit, ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children: they are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them)
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if possible.

### Types of Fire:

- **Criss-cross** fires are used to provide a large amount of heat and light and are fast burning.
- **Long Log** fires are good for cooking as they are slow burning and require little fuel.

### Safety and Responsibility:

- Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the direct supervision of a Ranger. This will usually be the Outdoor Learning Leader.
- Fires are lit using cotton wool, petroleum jelly and a strike stick.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one-to-one adult supervision.
- Sticks / wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

### Extinguishing:

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.

- Outdoor Learning Leaders should ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.

#### Storm (Kelly) kettles:

- Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan unless children are directly supervised by the Outdoor Learning Leader.
- The storm kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children must be seated at least 1.5 m away from the storm kettle.
- Children can feed the fire with one-to-one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely (stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle).
- Fuel should burn itself out, but if it does not it must be extinguished with water.
- Storm kettles should never be boiled with the cork in.

### **Appendix 3** Eating Procedure

Outdoor Learning recognise that raising awareness of the woodland environment increases children's interest in edible berries and fruits, which may be found outside.

However, there is no safe way of ensuring that children will always eat the correct berries and/or fruit, or that appropriate berries and/or fruit will be clean.

There is also the possibility that by promoting the correct ingestion of berries and/or fruit in Outdoor Learning sessions may lead to incorrect identification by children when out of school.

With these considerations in mind, we follow a policy on eating food during Outdoor Learning sessions:

- Outdoor Learning sessions on-site (i.e. those lasting a maximum of 1 ½ hours) will adopt a nil-by-mouth policy with the following exceptions:
  - Hot drinks made in storm kettles for the group, from commercially available products such as hot chocolate;
  - Drinks and foods, which is linked directly to the topic, such as elder cordial, which will only be sourced from commercially available products.
- In such cases the Outdoor Learning Leader will be responsible for checking that no member of the group has any listed allergy to any of the products. If they have, the Outdoor Learning Leader will use their discretion as to whether a substitute product or different activity will be most appropriate.

This policy was adopted by	Raw Learning
On	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
Date to be reviewed	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2025
Signed on behalf of the provider	<i>Rachel King</i>
Name of signatory	Rachel King
Role of signatory	Director